

For Immediate Release
May 18, 2020Contact: 262-284-8170
covid19@washozwi.gov**Long-Term Care Orders of the Health Officer Modified to Protect Residents**

Washington & Ozaukee Counties, WI – On Monday, May 18, 2020, Washington Ozaukee Public Health Officer Kirsten Johnson updated two existing orders to protect residents of long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. These modified, narrow orders are intended to specifically mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within the most vulnerable population.

“Both orders issued today utilize a focused approach to mitigate the risk of infection within our long-term care facilities,” said Kirsten Johnson, Public Health Officer. “The Supreme Court was clear: broad general orders are not legal. Instead, our approach is to protect our vulnerable populations through precise direction while offering guidelines for businesses to re-open safely.”

Following the requirements of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the first order requires all long-term care facilities including nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and memory care facilities to limit all in-person non-essential visitation or “lock-down” from outside visitors. It is NOT required for residents to remain in their rooms. Activities, dining room, and common areas are all opened. As with the general public, large gatherings which do not allow for physical distancing should be avoided. Residents that leave their rooms must wear a face mask. Guidelines within this order will remain in effect until further notice.

The second order requires all staffing agencies or similar businesses, including health care providers who provide staff at long-term care facilities in Washington and Ozaukee Counties, to disclose to the facility whether assigned staff have been exposed to COVID-19. Additionally, all individuals who obtain employment at long-term care facilities or who provide health care or similar services in long-term care facilities must disclose to their employer(s) if they are working in more than one long-term care facility in these counties.

Under the order, businesses which transport residents of long-term care facilities located in Washington and Ozaukee Counties are required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) while transporting residents, and all vehicles involved in the transport of residents are to be cleaned each day.

The Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department continues to be in frequent communication with long-term care facilities in Washington and Ozaukee Counties and will continue to provide guidance and assistance as needed.

All Orders of the Health Officer can be found at the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department website: www.washozwi.gov.

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